AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A negative-working photosensitive composition ~~characterized by~~ comprising

(a) an alkali-soluble resin,

(b) a ~~compound which causes a crosslinking reaction~~ crosslinking agent crosslinkable by an acid,

(c) a compound ~~which~~ that generates an acid ~~by~~ upon heating, wherein the compound is an onium salt of an acidic dye having a sulfonic group within the molecule, and

(d) a photothermal converting agent~~, wherein the compound (c) which generates an acid by heating described above is an onium salt of an acidic dye having a sulfonic group in the molecule thereof~~.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Cancelled)

4. (New) The composition of claim 1, wherein the alkali-soluble resin comprises a novolak resin.

5. (New) The composition of claim 1, wherein the composition comprises from 40 to 95 percent, by mass, of the alkali-soluble resin.

6. (New) The composition of claim 1, wherein the crosslinking agent comprises a resol resin.

7. (New) The composition of claim 1, wherein the composition comprises from 5 to 70 percent, by mass, of the crosslinking agent.

8. (New) The composition of claim 1, wherein the acidic dye having the sulfonic group has 21 or more carbon atoms in the molecule.

9. (New) The composition of claim 1, wherein the onium salt is a diazonium, iodonium, or sulfonium salt.

10. (New) The composition of claim 1, wherein the composition comprises from 0.01 to 50 percent, by mass, of the compound that generates an acid upon heating.

11. (New) The composition of claim 1, wherein the composition comprises from 0.1 to 20 percent, by mass, of the compound that generates an acid upon heating.

12. (New) The composition of claim 1, comprising a mixture of compounds that generate acid upon heating.

13. (New) The composition of claim 1, wherein the photothermal converting agent absorbs light in the near infrared to infrared region.

14. (New) The composition of claim 1, wherein the composition comprises from 3 to 50 percent, by mass, of a pigment as the photothermal converting agent.

15. (New) The composition of claim 1, wherein the composition comprises from 0.5 to 20 percent, by mass, of a dye as the photothermal converting agent.

16. (New) A printing plate precursor comprising:

a substrate; and

a photosensitive layer on the substrate, the photosensitive layer comprising

(a) an alkali-soluble resin,

(b) a crosslinking agent crosslinkable by an acid,

(c) a compound that generates an acid upon heating, wherein the compound is an onium salt of an acidic dye having a sulfonic group within the molecule, and

(d) a photothermal converting agent.

17. (New) The printing plate precursor of claim 16, wherein the precursor is sensitive to light in the near infrared to infrared region.

18. (New) The printing plate precursor of claim 16, wherein the alkali-soluble resin comprises a novolak resin.

19. (New) The printing plate precursor of claim 16, wherein the crosslinking agent comprises a resol resin.

20. (New) The printing plate precursor of claim 16, wherein the acidic dye having the sulfonic group has 21 or more carbon atoms in the molecule.

21. (New) A method for making a printing plate precursor having a photosensitive layer on a substrate, the method comprising:

(i) providing a substrate; and

(ii) applying to a surface of the substrate a composition comprising

(a) an organic solvent,

(b) an alkali-soluble resin,

(c) a crosslinking agent crosslinkable by an acid,

(d) a compound that generates an acid upon heating, wherein the compound is an onium salt of an acidic dye having a sulfonic group within the molecule, and

(e) a photothermal converting agent; and

(iii) drying the composition to form a photosensitive layer on the substrate.

22. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein the acidic dye having the sulfonic group has 21 or more carbon atoms in the molecule.